

Her Royal Highness Princess of Bahrain Praises Women's Rights Reforms

MANAMA, Bahrain, October 20, 2011 — Her Royal Highness Princess Sabeeka bint Ibrahim Al Khalifa, wife of His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa and President of the Supreme Council for Women (SCW), praised the government for the creation of Equal Opportunity Units and including the National Dialogue reforms as they relate to women in government plans.

The National Dialogue recommendations in respect to women include reforms aimed at offering women greater protection against violence, ensuring equal rights in the workplace, and greater political and economic empowerment, which includes a review of women's salary levels in the private sector.

The creation of Equal Opportunity Units, which have been set up by ministries and state bodies to further integrate the rights of women into government policies, are a practical mechanism for making sure the National Dialogue reforms are being implemented, HRH the Princess noted.

Her Royal Highness also thanked the Bahrain Center for Excellence for creating a plan to integrate women's needs into government policies. This came at the inaugural meeting of the committee, chaired by the Princess, which is tasked with the implantation of this plan.

Bahrain's Center for Excellence works to promote equal rights for all Bahraini's while spreading awareness related to transparency, justice and equal opportunity for all.

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**U.S. Optimistic About Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry Report
and Reform Implementations**

MANAMA—October 18, 2011—Yesterday, Deputy U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for Arabian Peninsula Affairs Stephen Seche welcomed the upcoming report from the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry (BICI) in addition to forthcoming National Dialogue implementations.

"This is a positive development and we believe that the Commission's findings will reflect a process which has been thorough and comprehensive and very professional," he said. "We will look forward to the recommendations."

Speaking of the commission's investigation procedure, Seche expressed confidence in the steps taken: "We have been encouraged by the process that has ensued here since the Commission first arrived in Bahrain. They have been very thorough and [Commission Chair] Mahmoud Cherif Bassiouni has spoken publicly about the response. He has been encouraged by the receptivity of all aspects of the Bahraini government to probe into the different questions, their need to get to as much information in the time they had."

If necessary, the U.S. will help Bahrain implement recommendations from the National Dialogue and the BICI report once finalized, Seche said.

"The commission report should be seen as an opportunity to build bridges between all the parties. It is an opportunity that people should take advantage of it. It is easy to nit-pick at the report," he concluded.

The Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry—lead by international criminal, human rights and humanitarian law authority Professor Mahmoud Cherif Bassiouni—is investigating events surrounding this year's unrest in Bahrain. The commission's narrative of events and recommended government actions will be published October 30.

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